

General Assembly Update

The Alphabet Soup That is General Assembly

I am a “wreck”! Actually, I am a REC (Ruling Elder Commissioner.) That’s one of the first things I learned at General Assembly. And throughout this experience I will be associating with TEC’s, YAAD’s, TSAD’s, MAD’s, and EAD’s. Hundreds of people are participating in the 225th GA of the PCUSA headquartered in KY. And all these people are being served by staff from OGA and PMA who are working hard to keep things running smoothly.

Thankfully, commissioners and participants are provided with a glossary to help us process all of these acronyms. But from what I have seen so far, each acronym represents a group of folks united in guiding our church forward. I’m very excited to be a part of such a worthy endeavor.

Because of the ongoing COVID pandemic, the 225th General Assembly (GA) is unlike previous GA’s in the way it will gather. The first plenary session (held Saturday, June 18) was a hybrid meeting with participants onsite and online. The committees, tasked with reviewing a wide variety of overtures and making recommendations to the full GA, will meet onsite at the PCUSA Louisville headquarters. I am a member of the Policies and Procedures Committee that begins its work on the 30th. After all of the committees have met, all of the participants will come together for five more plenary sessions via Zoom.

The docket for this year’s GA is full. In addition to dealing with organizational nuts and bolts, we will be addressing the church’s response to issues such as climate change, racism, and gun violence. We will also look forward and consider the financial sustainability of the church and ways the church can quickly adapt as the world around us changes. A number of overtures and initiatives that were held over from the 224th GA (because of the early outbreak of the COVID virus) that will be considered by this year’s gathering. Needless to say our docket is full.

The highlight of the Saturday plenary was the election of co-moderators for the next two years. We had two teams standing to serve that role. We elected Rev. Shavon Starling-Lewis and Rev. Ruth Santana-Grace. I am pleased with the results and look forward to serving under their leadership for the next two years.

The coming days and weeks will be filled with folks doing the business of the church. Regular worship experiences remind us that we are first and foremost the church and all of the business and busyness is in support of doing our work as the body of Christ. Our GA began with an inspiring worship service with a powerful message from our outgoing co-moderator Rev. Gregory Bentley. I encourage you to watch it. Here is the link: <https://ga-pcusa.org/video/#worship>

Your prayerful support is welcome and necessary. Please pray that the participants will have wisdom and unity in the Spirit. Also please pray healing for those delegates who have contracted COVID (including incoming co-moderator Ruth Santana-Grace) and safety for those meeting onsite in committees.